

A Home Safety Checklist

**Stay Active, Stay Independent
and Stay On Your Feet!**

Did you know?

- ✓ Falls are not a normal part of aging. They are predictable and can be prevented.
- ✓ Your home, furnishings and lifestyle all affect your risk of falling in and around the home.
- ✓ Removing hazards in and around the home can reduce the risk of falling and loss of independence.

Use this checklist to make your home a safer place to live.

Ontario 



USING YOUR HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Using this checklist, take your time and go through each room. Don't forget the basement, garage, porch and walkways too.

Think about having a family member or friend help you. Together you can spot the risks, make simple improvements and list changes needed to keep you and your family safe from falls.

A check in a "NO" box suggests that you could be at greater risk for a fall - use the chart on page 12 to make your home safer.

It's time to take control of your independence!

Outside your home

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the walkways and stairs leading to your home in good repair, free from cracks, holes and clutter? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the walkways, stairs, ramps and paths well lit? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the walkways, stairs and ramps finished with a non-slip surface or safety treads? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there handrails on both sides of entrance walkways, stairs and ramps? |

Garage

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the garage door easy to open and close? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | When your car is in the garage, can you get in and out of it easily? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the garage free from clutter, debris and other hazards? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there enough lighting? |

Remember:

Keep all walkways, ramps and stairs free of wet leaves, snow, ice and clutter.

Keep a mixture of sand and salt handy for icy walk areas.

Always wear shoes that have good treads.

If you use a cane, fit it with an “ice pick” so it won’t slip on icy surfaces.

Your entrance

YES NO

Do you have good lighting outside all entrances?

Are the eavestroughs over the entrances in good repair and clear of debris?

Do the doors have handles that make them easy to open and close?

Is there a bench or shelf to put packages on while you open the door?

Is the doorway wide enough (about 32" or 80 cm) for easy use with a walker, cane or shopping buggy?

Does the front mat stay firmly in position and is it in good condition?

Are porch and balcony floors in good shape and railings secure?

Are all exits and hallways clear of boxes, shoes and other clutter?

Remember:

Keep roof and eavestroughs over doorways free from snow and ice.

Consider putting up motion detector lights to light up the path to your door.

Your stairs

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all stairs in good repair? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the height of steps even and no greater than 8" (20 cm)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the widths of the stair treads even and at least 10" (25 cm)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do steps have a secured non-slip surface and clearly marked edges? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there handrails on both sides of the stairway and do they go beyond the top and bottom step? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the handrails mounted firmly and far enough away from the wall to allow for a solid grip? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there light switches at both the top and bottom of each flight of stairs? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all stairways well lit and free from shoes, packages and other clutter? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have scatter rugs been removed from top and bottom of stairs? |

Remember:

Avoid carrying large or heavy items when using the stairs.

Keep one hand free to use the handrail.

Always wear shoes when using stairs, step stools or ladders.

Provide a night light in the stair area.

Extend handrails beyond the top and bottom steps to provide stability.

Your floors

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do all doorways have a low doorsill or threshold (less than one-half inch)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are area rugs and runners fastened to the floor? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they have a slip-resistant backing? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is flooring in good repair and floor vents secure? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are floor surfaces non-slip, especially wet areas such as bathroom, kitchen, laundry and entrances? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you use non-skid wax and floor cleaners? |

Remember:

Highly waxed floors can be very slippery and cause you to fall.
Keep bathroom, kitchen, laundry and entrances dry to avoid slips.
Scatter rugs are dangerous. Attach area rugs and runners with doublesided carpet tape.
Carpets with a low, tight pile are safest.

Your living space

YES NO

Is there a light switch for turning on a light before entering a room?

Is the furniture in your living areas arranged so you can move easily without bumping into objects?

Are your travel paths clear of telephone and electrical cords, pets and their toys?

Are the windows easy to reach and to open, close and lock?

Remember:

Pets, their toys and leashes can be tripping hazards. Train your pets not to sleep on your travel paths. Pick up their toys when they are done playing. When walking your pet, keep the leash short to reduce your risk of tripping on it.

Consider installing motion sensor switches for lights.

Add electrical outlets and phone jacks to avoid extension cords.

A good stable chair with arm rests makes it easier to get up and sit down.

To make it easier to get in and out of chairs, consider putting wooden blocks under furniture or use extra foam cushions to raise the seat height.

Your kitchen

YES NO

Can you reach items you use most often without having to climb or strain to reach them?

Do you have a step stool (with a safety rail) for reaching high places?

Are heavy items in the lower cupboards and light items in the higher cupboards?

Are the electrical outlets easy to reach without using extension cords?

Can you turn the sink taps easily with one hand?

Remember:

Consider sitting down to complete kitchen tasks.

Avoid heavy lifting by resting large pots on the stove and filling with a cup.

Use a slotted spoon, metal colander or wire basket to remove vegetables or pasta from hot water rather than lifting the pot to drain.

Wait until water has cooled, drain using a cup or container so you don't have to lift the heavy pot.

Keep your emergency numbers beside the telephone.

Your bathroom

YES NO

Does your bathtub and shower have a non-slip mat or slip-resistant surface?

Is there good lighting in the bathroom, including a night light?

Have grab bars with a textured hand surface been added to your bathtub and shower?

Is it easy to reach and turn the taps on your basin or bathtub?

Does your bathroom floor mat have a slip-resistant backing?

Remember:

By placing towel racks close to the sink and tub, you are less likely to drip water on the floor.

A bath seat and an adjustable shower head can provide stability for bathing.

A raised toilet seat and grab bars make it easier to reach the toilet.

Use a long-handled tub scrubber/mop when cleaning the tub or shower walls to avoid bending and reaching.

Test the temperature of the water before getting into the shower or bath.

Your bedroom

YES NO

Is there a switch to turn lights on before entering your bedroom?

Is there a lamp or light switch within easy reach of your bed?

Is there a telephone within easy reach of your bed?

Is there a clear path from the bed to the bathroom?

Is there lots of space to move around the room freely?

Is there a working flashlight within easy reach of the bed?

Are all area rugs, mats and runners firmly secured to the floor and do they have slip-resistant backing?

Remember:

Keep your emergency numbers beside the telephone.

Sit rather than stand to complete dressing activities.

Get light-sensitive night lights that brighten when it gets dark in a room or hallway.

Consider a long-handled shoe horn or sock aid for putting on socks and shoes.

Keep items you use often in easy reach in closets and storage areas.

Your basement

YES NO

Is there plenty of light in the basement?

Is your basement floor free from clutter?

Are the edges of each stair clearly marked with a colour that stands out?

Can you move through the room without bumping into things?

Are the stairs well lit, in good repair and do they have a non-slip surface?

Is there a handrail or banister on both sides of the stairway and do they go beyond the top and bottom step?

Are there light switches at both the top and bottom of each flight of stairs?

Remember:

Consider putting a phone in the basement or carry a portable phone in your pocket.

Have a flashlight handy in case of power failure.

Be sure you know how to shut off the hydro, gas and water service.

Your medicine cabinet

YES NO

Do you know why you take each of your medications?

Do you know what side effects your medication may cause?
Some can increase the chance of falling.

Do you know when and how to take each of your medications?

Are your medications in clearly labelled containers in a cool dry place, away from the heat and humidity of the bath or shower?

Do you keep an updated medication record, including any herbal supplements and over-the-counter medications, and carry it with you at all times?

Remember:

Take old medications to your pharmacy or a hazardous waste disposal centre. Do not put them in the garbage or down the drain or toilet.

Only use medication that has been prescribed for you. Sharing medication can be dangerous and sometimes fatal.

Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before taking herbal supplements or over-the-counter medications. They are there to answer your questions.

Your safe home summary

Did you check any "NO" boxes?
Now is the time to record what needs to be done in the chart below.

	Work to be Done		Help Needed	Done
Outside				
Entrance				
Stairs				
Floors				
Living space				
Kitchen				
Bathroom				
Bedroom				
Basement				
Medicine cabinet				

For more information, contact:

Algoma Public Health

1.866.892.0172

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

1.800.563.2808

Porcupine Health Unit

1.800.461.1818

Public Health Sudbury & Districts

1.855.674.4330

Timiskaming Health Unit

1.866.747.4305

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